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# Buddhist Texts and Buddhist Images
## New Evidence from Kanaganahalli (Karnataka/India)*


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The site of Kanaganahalli in Karṇāṭaka (Mysore), a small village on the Bhīma River, became famous about 30 years ago when a fragment of one of Aśoka's Rock Edicts was found next to the Candrālāmbā Temple in January 1989 during the renovation of a Mahākālī temple, where it was used as the base of an image.[1] This find was of particular importance not only because it added another southern site after Yeṟṟaguḍi (discovered in 1928) to Aśoka's Rock Edicts, but first of all, because only this "Rock Edict" is not written on a rock, but on both sides of a stone slab. Stone slabs to be used for edicts are mentioned indeed at the end of the seventh and last Pillar Edict: *etaṃ devānaṃ piye āhā. iyaṃ dhaṃmalibi ata athi silāthaṃbhāni vā silāphalakāni vā tatha kaṭaviyā ena esa cilaṭhitike siyā* "This says Devānampiya. Where there are stone pillars or stone slabs this inscription on the Dharma must be produced there so that it may last for a long time." The discovery at Sannati confirmed Aśoka's words for the first time in India proper.[2]

The inscription of Aśoka found at Sannati should be seen within a larger archaeological context at the site of Kanaganahalli / Sannati, which slowly emerges as a major complex flourishing as a Buddhist centre under Śātavāhana rule from the 3rd century BC until the end of the Śātavāhana period at the beginning of the 3rd century AD. Details, however, are still unclear before further and extensive excavations might provide a firmer basis for better

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[1] Kenneth Roy Norman, "Aśokan Inscriptions from Sannati," *South Asian Studies* 7. 1991, pp. 101–110 = *Collected Papers IV*. Oxford 1993, pp. 226–244; Harry Falk: *Aśokan Sites and Artefacts*. Monographien zur indischen Archäologie, Kunst und Philologie Band 18. Mainz 2006 (rev.: P. Bernard, *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres Comptes Rendus des Séances de l'Année* 2007 [2009], 1395–1401; G. Fussman, *JAs* 296. 2008, 157–163; R. Salomon, *JAOS* 128. 2008 [2009], 795–797; K. Karttunen, *Studia Orientalia* 107. 2009, 375 foll.; R. Schmidt, *ZDMG* 159. 2009, 236–238; O. v. Hinüber, *IIJ* 53. 2010, 39–46; M. Willis, *JRAS* 22. 2012, 187 foll.), p. 130 (on Sannati), p. 116 (on Yeṟṟaguḍi).

[2] A Greek version of the Rock edicts (Kandahar II) written on one side of a stone slab was discovered in Kandahar in 1963. This slab was obviously inserted into the wall of a building, cf. Falk: *Aśokan Sites*, as preceding note, p. 244 foll.

understanding this site.

The excavations of the great Cetiya of Kanaganahalli, which certainly was a central place of Buddhist worship at least under the later Śātavāhanas, lasted from 1996 to 1999 and yielded a surprising wealth of images and inscriptions, which also mention the name of the building as Adhālaka-Mahācetiya.[3]

With about 270 inscriptions Kanaganahalli is indeed the most important find of Buddhist epigraphical material in one single place in India during the last century. The exact number of inscriptions is impossible to determine at present, because only the inscriptions nos. 1–150 are actually documented by images in the excavation report while those of the inscriptions nos. 151–270 are missing. Consequently, the reading of the inscriptions nos. 151–270 by K. P. Poonacha, which is fairly often faulty or plainly wrong, cannot be controlled, and these inscriptions are, therefore, unusable for research before documentation is provided. On the other hand, not all inscriptions found are included in the excavation report, as two important collections of photographs show. The first is a series of 405 photos taken in the year 2000 by Christian Luczanits, School of Oriental and African Studies, London. Due to circumstances beyond his control, these photos had to be taken in great haste, at random and unsystematically. Still, they very often show the original position of images and inscriptions sometimes only vaguely or not at all described in the excavation report. Here and there, also an additional inscription or image which are missing in the excavation report, emerge from the Luczanits material.[4]

A second series of photos of images and particularly of inscriptions was taken by a Japanese team working in Kanaganahalli in 2011 under the leadership of Professor Noritoshi Aramaki from Kyoto. Although not all inscriptions mentioned in the excavation report were also photographed by the Japanese team, some of the inscriptions published as undocumented readings by K. P. Poonacha, can be traced in this material. Still, mistakes in K. P. Poonacha's reading sometimes prevent to establish an unambiguous correspondence between a photo from the Kyoto project and the text printed in the excavation report. This somewhat annoying and confusing situation does not allow counting the number of inscriptions exactly. It seems that there are at least between 300 and 320 inscriptions.[5]

The majority of inscriptions, about 130, refer to donations in one way or the other. Very often, architectural parts were donated while the Cetiya was built or enlarged. The largest individual parts are the *āyāgathambha*s, columns erected at an entrance of *stūpa*s. Sets of five *āyāgathambha*s decorating all four entrances are known since a long time, e.g., from

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[3.] A report was published only in 2013 by K. P. Poonacha: *Excavations at Kanaganahalli (Sannati, Dist. Gulbarga, Karnataka).* Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, no. 106. Delhi 2011 (2013). Plates in this publication are referred to by their number, e.g., "MASI Plate CXII." The inscriptions, which are quoted in the following by their number (e.g., IV.2,1), are published in Maiko Nakanishi & O. v. Hinüber, *Kanaganahalli Inscriptions. ARIRIAB* XVII.2. Tokyo 2014. Supplement (quoted as *Kanaganahalli Inscriptions*). — The meaning of Adhālaka is not known (inscription I.8, p. 32).

[4.] This material is freely available in the internet under: www.luczanits.net/gallery3/index.php/docu/.

[5.] An additional badly damaged inscription from Kanaganahalli was discovered by Monica Zin in the Gulbarga Museum in early 2015. So far, only the second half is read: *toḍasa deyadhama sava* "Toḍa's pious gift. All," cf. *Kanaganahalli Inscriptions* III.1,12 and note 45 below. The first nine *akṣara*s, which are separated from the second part of the inscription by a gap, seem to contain the title of the lost image.

Jaggayapeṭa, Nāgārjunakoṇḍa or Amarāvatī. In Kanaganahalli, however, there are only four *āyāgathambha*s, which were found at the eastern entrance to the Cetiya broken and lying on the ground (MASI Plate XVI, B). That there were only four *āyāgathambha*s is confirmed by an inscription and particularly by two images of a Stūpa found at Kanaganahalli.[6] The exact meaning of the word *āyāgathambha / āyākathambha* translated sometimes, but not correctly as "entrance pillars" is uncertain, most likely "pillars for offerings.[7]" However that may be, offerings were certainly made near the entrances to the *pradikṣiṇapatha*, where vessels were found, probably to receive donations such as flowers or, given their size, rather money.[8] This brings to mind at once the malpractice of the Vajjiputtaka monks at Vesāli as described in the Vinaya, which was the reason for the second council, where collecting money was condemned.[9]

The donation of a set of four *āyāgathambha*s certainly was a major contribution. Other parts of architecture were smaller, less expensive and therefore affordable to many people. There are first of all the many architectural parts called *puphagahani*s (Skt. *puṣpagrahaṇī*). This word occurs for the first time in epigraphy at Kanaganahalli as a technical term of architecture.[10] Because the word *puphagahani* is inscribed on this component of the Cetiya, it is now possible to see, what a *puphagahani* is (Fig. 1).

These *puphagahani*s were originally used as a low balustrade encircling a part of the Cetiya, which is usually called "upper *pradakṣiṇapatha*." This may be an unfortunate appellation because it does not seem that this "upper *pradakṣiṇapatha*" was easily accessible. Stairs are neither mentioned in the excavation report nor visible on any of the published images. However, the continuous line of *puphagahani*s is clearly interrupted at one point, which might indicate that it was possible to access the "upper *pradakṣiṇapatha*" here. (Fig. 2) In any case some sort of access was necessary, if only for cleaning purposes. An outlet for rainwater can be seen in one of the *puphgahani*s (Fig. 3).

During the excavations these *puphagahani*s were removed from their find spot without the original position being indicated in the excavation report. Nor is their exact number

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[6] Inscription II.1,1 in *Kanaganahalli Inscriptions*, p. 41. An image showing four *āyāgathambha*s at all entrances to a Cetiya is MASI Plate CXVIII, A (p. 424). A different Cetiya with four *āyāgathambha*s is included in the Luczanits collection (38: 38–42). A full view of this image, which is missing in the excavation report, is published in J. Soni, M. Pahlke & C. Cüppers: *Buddhist and Jaina Studies. Proceedings of the Conference in Lumbini, February 2011.* Lumbini 2014, p. 73, plate 18. Four *āyāgathambha*s are also mentioned in literary texts on Stūpas: G. Roth, "Symbolism of the Buddhist Stūpa according to the Tibetan version of the *Caitya-vibhāga-vinayodbhāva-sūtra*, the Sanskrit treatise *Stūpa-lakṣaṇa-kārikā-vivecana*, and the corresponding passage in Kuladatta's *Kriyāsaṃgraha*," in: *Anna Libera Dallapiccola: The Stūpa*. Beiträge zur Südasienforschung 55. Wiesbaden 1980, pp. 183–209 = G. Roth: *Indian Studies (Selected Papers)*. Delhi 1986, pp. 251–277, particularly p. 191 = 259 and 193 = 252 (bottom).

[7] For details see *Kanaganahalli Inscriptions*, p. 40 foll.; moreover, the closely related word *āyāgapaṭa* is dealt with in Johanna Engelberta van Lohuizen de Leeuw: *The "Scythian" Period*. Leiden 1949, p. 157. The derivation of *āyāgapaṭa* from *\*ārya(ka)paṭa* which seems to be implied by van Lohuizen is as impossible as that of *āryavati* from *\*ārya(ga)vatī*.

[8] One of these vessels measures 34×44cm, hight 25cm according to the excavation report (p. 99) where they are shown on MASI Plates XVIII, B (cf. XXIX, C and Luczanits 36:09); XLI, B.

[9] These monks used bronze vessels filled with water to collect money: *kaṃsapātiṃ udakena pūretvā*, Vin II 294,13.

[10] On the literary evidence see O. v. Hinüber, "Some Remarks on Technical Terms of Stūpa Architecture," pp. 29–46 in this issue of *ARIRIAB*.

communicated, which, however, can be inferred as a total of about 100 pieces.[11]

Many *puphagahani*s are inscribed, perhaps all, but that is not known. So far, 47 inscriptions are recorded, some of them damaged or hardly legible. They usually mention besides the technical term *puphagahani* also the name of a donor. Moreover, some inscriptions, perhaps every tenth, seem to contain an indication of their relative position in the circle of *puphagahani*s. For, a number is added at the end of the respective inscriptions: The numbers 10, 20 and 50 are preserved.[12] Given the bad state of preservation of many inscriptions on the *puphagahani*s, missing numbers may be destroyed.[13]

Moreover, some inscriptions do not only mention *puphagahani*s, but also other terms to describe the object of a donation such as *cetiyapuphagahani*, II.2,7, *sapuphagahani*, II.2,13, *puphagahanipaṭa*, II.2,9 or *paṭadāna*, II.2,11. A clue to the meaning of these expressions is perhaps *sa-puphagahani* "together with a *puphagahani*." For, this might indicate that the accompanying slab with or without image sitting below the *puphagahani* was also donated by one and the same person. The same could be meant by adding the word *paṭa* to *puphagahani*. If this is correct, a *cetiyapuphagahani* would refer to the gift of a *puphagahani* above a slab showing a *cetiya*. However, the missing information on the original find spots of the *puphagahani*s often prevents the identification of the slab once belonging to a certain *puphagahani* and, consequently, it is impossible to decide whether or not this suggestion is correct.

Moreover, missing documentation does not allow determining the exact find spot of the longest inscription recovered from Kanaganahalli (I.8). This inscription, which was perhaps removed from the floor (?)[14] of the "upper *pradakṣiṇapatha*," records a gift of some architectural components called *agarako paṭasa(ṃ)tharo ca* by the nun Dhammasiri from the Koru family. The technical term *agaraka* remains obscure for the time being. It might indicate the material used or rather some component of the Cetiya. Consequently the object donated can be understood only in part: "an *agaraka* and a covering with slabs" that is the covering of the floor of the "upper *pradakṣiṇapatha*."

This inscription, which contains the name Adhālaka Mahācetiya, records a donation dated to the year 35 of King Vāsiṣṭhīputra Śrī Puḷumāvi. This rare date of an architectural component used in the construction of the Adhālaka Mahācetiya is matched by a second dated inscription found on one of the uprights or on a coping stone of the *vedikā* (again the

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[11] The position of the *puphagahani*s on the Cetiya is indicated in the reconstruction of the Adhālaka Mahācetiya by M. Nakanishi in *Kanaganahalli Inscriptions*, p. 6, cf. MASI, Fig. 23 and *Kanaganahalli Inscriptions*, p. 45 on the calculation of their number.

[12] Cf. *Kanaganahalli Inscriptions*, p. 46.

[13] If this assumption is correct the Kanaganahalli inscriptions add to the evidence collected by R. Salomon, "Kharoṣṭhī Syllables Used as Location Markers in Gandhāran Stūpa Architecture," in: *Architetti, Capomastri, Artigiani. L'organizzazione dei cantieri e della produzione artistica nell'Asia ellenistica. Studi offerti a Domenico Faccenna nel suo ottantesimo compleanno a cura di Pierfrancesco Callieri*. Serie Orientale Roma C. Rome 2006, pp. 181–224.

[14] Numerous inscribed floor slabs were found in Sāñcī; others from different sites are published by Peter Skilling, "Stūpas, Aśoka and Buddhist Nuns: Early Buddhism in Ujjain and Malwa," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*. New Series 25. 2011 [2015], pp. 157–172, particulalry 160–163, or in Abdul Waheed Khan: *A Monograph on an Early Buddhist Stupa at Kesanapalli*. Andhra Pradesh Archaeological Series No. 27. Hyderabad 1969, plates IX - XXII, p. 3 foll. These slabs are called in inscriptions either *paṭa* or *dāmurā / domurā* of unknown meaning and derivation.

excavation report is unclear). This inscription (I. 10) dates the completion of this section of the Cetiya to the year 6 of King Vāsiṣṭhīputra Śrī Sātakarṇi, the immediate successor to Vāsiṣṭhīputra Śrī Puḷumāvi. Because the year 35 certainly was one of the last years of Puḷumāvi's long reign, the interval between the completion of the upper and the lower *pradakṣiṇapatha* should have been less than a decade, at best perhaps be around 7 or 8 years, which would correspond to a date approximately between 125 and 135 AD following the Śātavāhana chronology.[15]

If the construction work proceeded from centre to periphery as assumed here, this decade was the period during which all the slabs with or without images around the lower *pradakṣiṇapatha* together with the *puphagahani*s on top of them were inserted (at this point approximately the gift by Dhammasiri was made and recorded), the plastering of the lower *pradakṣiṇapatha* was completed and the *vedikā* erected. This procedure seems likely because of practical considerations. For, it does not make much sense to begin building with the *vedikā* as an enclosure around the Cetiya and thus block the free access to the lower *pradakṣiṇapatha*. If these assumptions are correct, this may be a unique opportunity to estimate the duration of one phase of building a Buddhist Cetiya in ancient India.

The donation of architectural components was only one concern of the donors, who came from different parts of the Śātavāhana kingdom to participate in the merit gained by the construction of the Cetiya, among them at least 15 donors from far away Dhañakaḍa[16] that is Amarāvatī. It underlines the exceptional prestige of the Adhālaka Mahācetiya that the construction attracted donors from all over the kingdom. For, those donors from Amarāvatī, who contributed to the Stūpa at Kanaganahalli could have made a donation to their "home Stūpa" at Dhañakaḍa rather and thus spared themselves the trouble to travel the considerable distance of more than 300 km.[17] It is, however, not impossible that there was no opportunity at that time to make merit at home that induced them to go to Kanaganahalli. For, according to the researches by Akira Shimada there were no or only very limited building activities at Amarāvatī during the first half of the second century, because the bulk of construction work was accomplished before the time of Puḷumāvi, who established Śātavāhana rule in the area. Therefore, the strong presence of donors from Amarāvatī also may have a political dimension. The donors availed themselves of the opportunity not only to make merit at a Cetiya of outstanding importance to the Śātavāhanas, but also to demonstrate their loyalty to their new overlord. In any case the presence of donors from Amarāvatī at Kanaganahalli during the first decades of the second century can perhaps be used to confirm A. Shimada's conclusions.[18]

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[15] The present state of knowledge on Śātavāhana chronology is summerized in *Kanaganahalli Inscriptions*, pp. 18–25.

[16] According to the Kanaganahalli inscriptions this is the correct form of the place name, while an inhabitant of *dhañakaṭa / dhañakaḍa* is called *dhañakaḍakasa*, II.2,11 etc., masc. with the corresponding fem. °–*ikā* in *dhañakaḍikāya gharaniyā*, II.2.5 etc.

[17] On Amarāvatī: Akira Shimada, "Amaravati and Dhānyakaṭaka. Topology of Monastic Spaces in Ancient Indian Cities," in: Jason Hawkes & Akira Shimada (eds.): *Buddhist Stupas in South Asia. Recent Archaeological, Art–Historical, and Historical Perspective*s. Oxford 2009, p. 216–234.

[18] Akira Shimada: *Early Buddhist Architecture in Context. The Great Stūpa at Amarāvatī (ca. 300 BC – 300 CE)*. Brill's Indological Library 43. Leiden 2013, p. 112.

Later dates are preserved in inscriptions only at the entrances. Three images decorating the western *āyāga*-platform and donated by members of the same family, a novice, his sister and his brother, are dated to the year 11 of Caṇḍasātakarṇi, which might correspond to 211 AD (I.13). This is about a century later than the dates of the "upper *pradakṣiṇapatha*" and the *vedikā*. Thus building activities and renovation work continued over a long time. The last date is still about 20 years later, by 240, when a panel was inserted at the eastern entrance of the Cetiya in the 15th year of the reign of Māṭharīputra Śrī Puḷumāvi (I.14). Therefore it seems that all late building activities, as far as they are dated by inscriptions, took place at the entrances only. In a way, the Adhālaka Mahācetiya might have resembled a European medieval cathedral as an eternal construction site: Those monks mentioned in the *Mūlasārvāstivāda-Vinaya* as complaining about the noise of ongoing building activities, which disturbed them in their meditation, may have lived near a place like the Adhālaka Mahācetiya.[19]

The subjects of the images at the entrances are taken from the life of the Buddha and show sometimes a series of episodes, which could be seen when approaching the Cetiya before reaching the *pradakṣiṇapatha*.

Other images show scenes from the previous lives of the Buddha. There are 18 inscribed panels with scenes from various *Jātaka*s among them the *Velāma-jātaka*, a *Jātaka* that once existed in the Theravāda collection as no. *497 and is represented also at the Hpetleik temple in Pagan in Burma as late as 10th or 11th century, but lost to the *Jātaka-atthavaṇṇanā* of the Mahāvihāra at Anurādhapura.[20]

The form of the titles of *Jātaka*s used as captions of the images at the Cetiya is noteworthy: *jātaka velāmiya* (III.1,5) instead of *Velāma-jātaka* or *jātaka vesatariya* (III.1,14) for *Vessantara-jātaka*, the name used in the *Jātaka-atthavaṇṇanā*. There are only three labels in Kanaganahalli, which follow the pattern of titles familiar in the Theravāda collection, among them a *sukajātaka* (III.1,16). Both forms of titles indeed did exist once in the Theravāda tradition as well, but the type *vessantariya jātaka* was abandoned when the *Jātaka-atthavaṇṇanā* was created.[21]

Among the various, sometimes not yet identified topics of Buddhist narratives there is one image which calls for special attention. (Fig. 4) It is labelled as *aya majhimo sacanāmo aya ca dudubhisaro* (III.3,2) "the venerable Majjhima Saccanāma and the venerable Dundubhissara." Both, Majjhima and Dundubhissara are well-known monks sent as missionaries to the Himālayas according to the Theravāda tradition. Therefore, the first impression when seeing this image is that these three missionaries are shown carrying relics with them while travelling to the Himālayas, and this is indeed said in the caption of MASI

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[19]. G. Schopen, "On Monks and Menial Laborers. Some Monastic Accounts of Building Buddhist Monasteries," in: *Architetti, Capomastri, Artigiani*, as note 13 above, pp. 225–245 = *Buddhist Nuns, Monks, and Other Wordly Matters. Recent Papers on Monastic Buddhism in India*. Honolulu 2014, pp. 251–275, particularly p. 241 = 265.

[20]. O. v. Hinüber: *Entstehung und Aufbau der Jātaka-Sammlung*. Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Mainz. Abhandlungen der geistes- und sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, Jg 1998, No. 7, pp. 117 foll.; *Kanaganahalli Inscriptions*, pp. 85–91.

[21]. *Entstehung und Aufbau*, as preceding note, p. 11 note 32.

Plate XCVII "Transportation of the relics, by the revered Majhima, Sachanāmā and Dudubhisāra" (sic). This, however, cannot be true. The riders are not monks, and monks were not normally supposed to travel on elephants,[22] nor are relics mentioned in any account of the Buddhist mission at the time of Aśoka. Therefore, a different interpretation is called for. Perhaps not Majjhima and Dundubhissara carrying relics are shown in the upper register, but *their* relics being carried. If this is correct, the relics carried by the riders on the elephant in the lower register could be those of Kassapagotta, a third missionary, who accompanied Majjhima and Dundubhissara.[23]

If this assumption is correct, the question arises where the relics were brought to. A first guess would be Kanaganahalli. However, no relics at all were found during the excavations,[24] and it is perhaps unlikely that there were any, because the building is called Adhālaka Mahācetiya, and not Adhālaka Mahāstūpa.[25]. However, relics of the missionaries were found at Sāñcī, but only those of Majjhima and Kassapagotta. It seems that no relics of Dundubhissara were available at Sāñcī, because his relics were "substituted" by those of one of his pupils (Gotiputa).[26] Consequently, the destination of the three riders remains unknown.

Unlike at any other Stūpa or Cetiya in ancient India, the program shown in the images at the Adhālaka Mahācetiya is connected to what is now history, but was politics of the day to the monks living under Śātavāhana rule.

An event of obviously outstanding importance to the community of monks at the Adhālaka Mahācetiya was a precious gift offered by a king of the ruling dynasty (Fig. 5). This again is a unique image, because nowhere else a royal gift of this type seems to be depicted. The inscription can be safely restored as: *rāyā sātakaṇi mahācetiyasa rupāmayāni payumāni oṇoyeti* (I.7) "King Sātakarṇi donates silver lotus flowers[27] to the Mahācetiya."

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[22.] However, according to Xuanzang, monks with outstanding intellectual achievements could be honored by being allowed to travel on an elephant: *Si-yu-ki. Buddhist Records of the Western World*. trsl. by Samuel Beal. London 1884. Vol. I, p. 80 foll. = R. Li (trsl.): *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions*. Berkeley 1996, p. 57 foll.

[23.] Kassapagotta is named in: *Kassapagotto ca yo thero Majjhimo Durabhisaro / Sahadevo Mūlakadevo Himavante yakkhagaṇaṃ pasādayuṃ*, Dīp VIII 10, vgl. *gantvā catūhi therehi desesi Majjhimo isi*, Mhv XII 41 (*Kassapagottatthero Mūlakadevatthero, Dundubhissaratthero Sahadevatthero*, Mhv-ṭ 317,21 foll.); *pesesi Majjhimaṃ theraṃ Himavantapadesakaṃ*, Mhv XII 6; *Majjhimatthero pana Kassapagottattherena Alakadevattherena Dundubhissarattherena Sahadevattherena ca saddhiṃ Himavantapadesabhāgaṃ gantvā*, Sp 68,1–3. — Kassapagotta seems to be a more likely choice than Sahadeva or Mūlaka(Alaka)deva, because he figures more prominently in the list of missionaries.

[24.] K. P. Poonacha: *Excavations*, as note above 3, p. 71a.

[25.] According to the *Mahāsāṃghika-Vinaya* "it is called stūpa that has relics in it, and it is called *caitya* that has not relics in it" (Yasunori Ejima) quoted in G. Roth, "Symbolism of the Stūpa," as note 6 above, p. 195 = 263, who also refers to André Bareau, "La construction et le culte des Stūpa," *BEFEO* 50. 1960, p. 240. However, this distinction is not always strictly observed in Theravāda texts, e.g.: *thūpañ c'assa karothā ti assa Bāhiyassa sarīradhātuyo gahetvā cetiyañ ca karotha*, Ud-a 97,6 foll.; *uttamaṃ thūpaṃ seṭṭhaṃ cetiyaṃ avandiṃ*, Ap-a 366,3: on the confusion of both terms see Gregory Schopen, "The phrase 'sa pṛthivīpradeśaś caityabhūto bhavet' in the *Vajracchedikā*: Notes on the Cult of the book in Mahāyāna," *IIJ* 17. 1975, pp. 149–181 = *Figments and Fragments of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India. More Collected Papers*. Honolulu 2005, pp. 25–62, particularly p. 151 = 28.

[26.] Michael Willis: *Buddhist Reliquaries from Ancient India*. London 2000 (rev.: R. E. Coninham, *South Asian Studies* 17. 2001, pp. 223 foll.; O. v. Hinüber, *IIJ* 44. 2001, pp. 367–370; R. Salomon, *JAOS* 124. 2004, pp. 199–201), pp. 74 foll., 88b.

[27.] Golden lotus flowers (and golden stars: *bubbuḷa* = *tārakā* according to the sub-commentary) inside a Cetiya are mentioned in the *Samantapāsādikā*: *cetiyaghare suvaṇṇapadumasuvaṇṇabubbuḷakādīni honti*, Sp 543,6.

The upper panel shows the act of the donation. The king is pouring water from a vessel called *bhṛṅgāra*[28] into the hand(s) of a monk, who thus receives the gift on behalf of the Adhālaka Mahācetiya. This is the common way to indicate the change of ownership when a donation is made. Interestingly, as the inscription clearly states, the gift is not offered to the monks, but to the Cetiya. Indeed it is known from Buddhist legal literature that Cetiyas could possess property, which was clearly distinct from that of the monks, as it is said in the *Samantapāsādikā*, the commentary of the Theravāda *Vinaya*: "It is permitted to use the property of the Cetiya and the property of the Saṃgha to pay wages."[29] The text of the *Sāratthadīpanī* commenting on the *Samantapāsādikā* is still more explicit and closer to the scene on the image: "As a deposit for the Cetiya means: as a deposit for repairs of the Cetiya, as property of the Cetiya."[30] Thus text and image demonstrate that the ownership of property by a Cetiya was common practice everywhere in the Buddhist world.[31]

The king is called only Sātakarṇi, an epithet used by more than one Śātavāhana ruler. However, looking at the structure of the names of later kings of this dynasty shows that the first part is the name of the *gotra* of the mother followed by the personal name such as Vāsiṣṭhīputra Śrī Puḷumāvi. However, the same king is also called only Puḷumāvi. In the same way Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi could drop the reference to his mother, and still be unambiguously identified, because all other Sātakarṇis are either Śrī Sātakarṇi, Yajña Sātakarṇi etc., who would have hardly dropped Śrī or Yajña.[32] Therefore most likely Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi is meant, who ruled from about 60 to about 85 AD.

The obvious question whether or not the image is contemporary to his reign, is not easy to answer. The panel showing Sātakarṇi is one of the slabs covering the upper drum behind and above the *puphagahani*s. If Sātakarṇi is Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi, he is the immediate predecessor of Puḷumāvi, who ruled at least 35 years, which is known for certain only after the excavation of Kanaganahalli. Given the time of less than a decade (approximately 125–135) needed to build the lower part of the Cetiya as conjectured above, it is perhaps unlikely that the construction of the upper part stretched over more than forty years, and that the slab was executed already during Sātakarṇi's life time to be inserted only under his successor Puḷumāvi (unless this is a reused piece from an earlier building, which is always possible).

If all this is true, Sātakarṇi is one of the early Śātavāhana kings remembered at Kanaganahalli such as Mantalaka (I.5), who was known previously only from the dynastic lists preserved in the *Purāṇa*s. The *gotra*-name of his mother is not mentioned at

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[28.] Albrecht Wezler: *Bhṛṅgāra in Sanskrit Literature*. Aligarh Oriental Series No. 8. Aligarh 1987.

[29.] *vetanañ ca pan' ettha cetiyasantakaṃ pi saṃghasantakaṃ pi dātuṃ vaṭṭati*, Sp 387,14; cf. also: *dvāvīsati koṭṭhāse katvā dasa bhikkhūnaṃ dasa bhikkhunīnaṃ eko puggalassa eko cetiyassa dātabbo*, Sp 1142,2–4 "having made twenty two shares, he must give ten to the monks, ten to the nuns, one to an individual (monk), one to the Cetiya" in a paragraph dealing with the distribution of donations (Sp 1141,22–1143,23).

[30.] *cetiyassa upanikkhepato ti cetiye navakammatthāya upanikkhittato cetiyasantako*, Sp-pṭ Bᵉ III 493,21 ad Sp 1406,14.

[31.] Evidence from the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-Vinaya* is presented in Gregory Schopen, "The Buddha as an Owner of Property and Permanent Resident in Mediaeval Indian Monasteries." *JIPh* 18. 1990, pp. 181–217 = *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks. Collected Papers on Archaeololgy, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India*. Honolulu 1997, pp. 258–289.

[32.] It can be ruled out that the very early king called only Sātakarṇi is meant, whose rule and dates are doubtful, perhaps at the end of the 1ˢᵗ century BC.

Kanaganahalli and not known from any other source. Using only his personal name thus concurs with the donative inscription of Sātakarṇi.

A further argument for dating the inscription after the death of Sātakarṇi is the wording: Living persons commemorate their donations to the Cetiya as "gift of ..." that is *dāna* with a name in the genitive. In contrast, "Sātakarṇi ... donates" sounds like the description of a past event.[33]

Moreover, there is a second inscription recording a royal event, and again a donation (Fig. 6). In the upper register two kings are facing each other, easily recognized as kings by the umbrellas held over their heads. One king receives a donation from a second king, who pours water into the right hand of the first king. This is described in a most unusual inscription: *rāya puḷumāvī ajayatasa ujeni deti* (I.9) "King Puḷumāvi hands over Ujjain to Ajaya(ṃ)ta (ʻthe Non-victorious')." The inscription is unique in various respects. Nowhere else a king is shown giving away a city to second king. The second king's name is not mentioned. For, it is highly unlikely that the receiving king would have called himself "non-victorious" that is "a loser," if the interpretation *ajayatasa* is correct, but there is hardly any room for a different understanding of the very clearly readable characters.

It is not easy to grasp the message which the inscription might convey. A first and obvious step is an investigation of the relation of the Śātavāhanas to Ujjain. The Śātavāhana Empire was originally based in western South India with their capital being Pratiṣṭhāna (Paiṭhān) about 60 km south of Aurangabad. During the reign of Puḷumāvi's (85–125) predecessor Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi (60–85), the Śātavāhanas managed, although for a short period of time only, to wrestle Ujjain from their northern rivals the Kṣatrapa rulers, or more precisely from Caṣṭana, who ruled, it seems, over an unusually long period from 78–130 and was thus a contemporary of both, Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi and Puḷumāvi. This was even known in the western world at the time. For, the Greek geographer Πτολεμαῖος / Ptolemy (died in about 170) mentions the rulers Τιαστανός at ᾽Οζήνη (Ujjain) and Σιριπτολεμαῖος at Βαιθάνα (Paiṭhān) as contemporaries.[34] The remarkably exact transcription of the Indian names as found in the Greek text shows that there was a fairly precise, if slightly outdated knowledge on India available in Rome during Ptolemy's life time due to the active trade between the Roman Empire and South India.[35]

While it seems that Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi was able to hold Ujjain as he is called lord of Avanti / Malwa (that includes Ujjain) in an inscription,[36] his successor, according to the

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[33.] It is impossible to guess the motive behind this donation: A military victory, perhaps in the north by defeating the Kṣatrapa ruler Caṣṭana, seems to be not totally impossible (see below). This, however, is highly speculative.

[34.] *La géographie de Ptolémée. L'Inde (VII, 1–4). Tetxe établi par* Louis Renou. Paris 1925, p. 28 § 63; p. 35 § 82.

[35.] See, e.g., Pia Brancaccio, "Close Encounters: Multicultural Systems in Ancient India," in: Doris Meth Srinivasan (ed.): *On the Cusp of an Era. Art in the Pre-Kuṣāṇa World*. Brill's Inner Asian Library Volume 18. Leiden 2007 (rev.: S. R. Quintanilla, *JAOS* 129. 2009, pp. 505–507; O. v. Hinüber, *IIJ* 54. 2011, pp. 89–94), p. 385–397.

[36.] E. Senart, "The Inscriptions in the Caves at Nāsik," *EI* VIII 1905–06, pp. 59–96, p. 60, lines 1–2: ... *rājaraño Gotamīputasa ... °-anupa-vidabha-ākarāvati-rājasa*; Vasudev Vishnu Mirashi: *The History and Inscriptions of the Sātavāhanas and the Western Kshatrapas*. Bombay 1981, p. 43: Anūpa and Ākarāvatī "East and West Māḷwā."

Kanaganahalli inscription, was obviously not.

In a great gesture he seems to give the precious and prestigious city to his Kṣatrapa rival as a present, perhaps in order to re-establish peace. For, following chapter seven in Kauṭalya's *Arthaśāstra* which deals with peace treaties that can be concluded in different ways, one method is described in the following words according to the translation by Patrick Olivelle:[37] "Protecting the remaining constituents by surrendering a portion of his land is the 'pre-planned peace act.'" This means that an almost defeated king offers part his territory to his opponent to preserve his independence and the integrity of his remaining territory. The image from Kanaganahalli almost looks like an illustration of his paragraph from the Arthaśāstra: King Puḷumāvi is seen handing over part of his territory, the city of Ujjain, to an anonymous ruler simply called *ajayaṃta*. If so, it might mirror the end of a conflict with the ruler contemporary to Puḷumāvi in the north, the Kṣatrapa Caṣṭana (78–130), who in the early years of his reign seems to have lost Malwa and consequently Ujjain to Puḷumāvi's predecessor Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi (60–85), but regained it perhaps during Puḷumāvi's early years.

Of course no date of this event is known, but it seems possible that history repeated itself and that the Śātavāhana ruler as later his Kṣatrapa opponent, both took advantage of the, not rarely, somewhat tumultuous transition from one reign to the next.[38] If this assumption is correct, the image shows an event which might perhaps haven taken place early in Puḷumāvi's reign, say around 90 AD. If so, it documents one phase in the changing relationship between the Śātavāhanas and the Kṣatrapas. At this point they make peace, which held for a while, because Puḷumāvi's successor Vāsiṣṭhīputra Śrī Sātakarṇi (125–147) married the daughter of Caṣṭana's successor the Kṣatrapa Rudradāman (130–160).[39] Still, before 150 AD the relations deteriorated again and Rudradāman states in his famous inscription written in AD 150 on the rock at Girnār, where already Aśoka had the western set of his rock edicts engraved that he defeated a Śātavāhana ruler, whose full name he does not communicate, but who should have been Śrī Sātakarṇi, Rudradāman's own son-in-law. This might explain the unusually friendly words, which Rudradāman has for his defeated opponent, and the vagueness about his name.[40]

The image of Puḷumāvi and Caṣṭana, if interpreted correctly, contributes substantially not only to the political history of the period, but it also to art history. For, if the kings as seen on the image from Kanaganahalli are compared with the representation on their respective coins, it is at once evident that we do not have portraits at Kanaganahalli, and at best fairly bad portraits on the Śātavāhana coins, while the image on the Kṣatrapa coins is perhaps nearer to the likeness with the person shown (Fig. 7).[41]

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[37] Patrick Olivelle: *King, Government, and Law in Ancient India. Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra. A New Annotated Translation*. Oxford 2013, p. 284: *bhūmyekadeśatyāgena śeṣaprakṛtirakṣaṇam ādiṣṭasaṃdhiḥ*, 7.3.32.

[38] Richard Salomon, "The Men who would be King: Reading between the Lines of Dynastic Genealogies in India and Beyond," *Religions of South Asia* 5. 2011, pp. 267–291.

[39] Shobhana Gokhale: *Kanheri Inscriptions*. Poona 1991, p. 62, inscription no. 16.

[40] Franz Kielhorn, "Junāgaḍh Rock Inscription of Rudradāman; Year 72," *EI* 8. 1905–06, p. 36–47: *dakṣiṇāpates sātakarṇer dvir api nīrvyājam avajītyāvajītya saṃbandhāvidūra[ta]yā anutsādanāt prāptayaśasa* (line 12).

[41] On portraits in ancient India: Vincent Lefèvre: *Portraiture in Early India Between Transience and Eternity*.

Lastly, this image might be also regarded as part of a political program. Positioned at the well visible upper drum of the Adhālaka Mahācetiya, which was closely connected to the house of the Śātavāhanas, it was certainly meant to convey an important political message. However, losing a city as important and as prestigious as Ujjain was in ancient India, is nothing to be particularly proud of.[42] Still, this event was advertised in public.

The fact that the Śātavāhanas lost some of their territories in the north must have been common knowledge throughout the Śātavāhana Kingdom. Therefore, the king may have tried *ex post* to convert defeat if not into victory, but at least into an act of generosity towards his enemy by stating that he hands over Ujjain to the Non-victorious. This language was perhaps chosen to underline Puḷumāvi's superiority in spite of this political mishap. The opponent is not named (which would have increased the opponent's fame), but referred to by the negative attribute *ajayaṃtasa*. The positive *jayaṃta* "victorious" is a rare attribute, which kings use to describe themselves.[43] Consequently, this language is perhaps meant to indicate a certain superiority, if not contempt from Puḷumāvi's side, who did all he could to place himself into a favourable light as the one who graciously restored peace, a peace that gave him a free hand for action in the south. For, despite of his losses in the north, Puḷumāvi is supposed to have added considerable areas in the south to the Śātavāhana Kingdom.

If the history of the construction of the Adhālaka Mahācetiya as outlined above is approximately correct, the image was probably executed and put into its position during Puḷumāvi's lifetime, as it is one of the slabs of the upper drum that was probably built during his long and, it seems, quite prosperous reign. For, building a Cetiya so richly decorated as the Adhālaka Mahācetiya does not point to an economic crisis.

The subjects of the Śātavāhanas seem to have shared the prosperity, because they could obviously spare substantial sums of money to make donations.[44] An outstanding example is a donation by the Toḍa family:[45] *toḍakulasa kacūkā niyātāna* (II.4,23). (Fig. 8) "The gift, encasement slabs, of the Toḍa family."[46]

The act of having donated the slabs is indicated again by the presence of a *bhṛṅgāra*. The gift was offered to two monks by four laymen accompanied by two male children, who are seen as listening to the *anumodana* spoken by a preaching monk. The lower register shows four women and three female children. All these persons are according to the inscription

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*Handbuch der Orientalistik*. Zweite Abteilung. Südasien Band 25. Leiden 2011 (rev.: C. Pieruccini, *ZDMG* 163. 2013, pp. 581–585); Gérard Colas: *Penser l'icône en Inde ancienne*. Turnhout 2012 (rev.: *BSOAS* 77. 2014, pp. 234–236; *ZDMG* 165. 2015, pp. 246–249), pp. 51–55 "portraits royaux."

[42]  On the importance of Ujjain see P. Skilling, "Stūpas, Aśoka and Buddhist Nuns," as note 14 above.

[43]  O. v. Hinüber, "Mitteilungen," as note * above, p. 25 note 23.

[44]  Only one inscription records the gift of money to the Adhālaka Mahācetiya: *aṭhāsata kāhapaṇani*, II.10,1 "800 *kahāpaṇa*s."

[45]  Probably the same Toḍa family is mentioned in various other donations, where the head of the family once is referred to as *toḍagahapati*, III.1,12 "the banker from the Toḍa (family)," which again points to their wealth.

[46]  Although the last word of the inscription is badly written, there can be hardly any doubt that *niyātana* "gift" is intended. The verb *niryātayati* meaning "to make a gift" is very common in Buddhist literature (BHSD s.v., further, e.g., *Śikṣāsamuccaya* ed. C. Bendall 1902, 22,5 foll.; *Adbhutadharmaparyāya*, *JIABS* 11/2.1988, 34,1 foll. etc.) and in Buddhist epigraphy (H. Falk, "A Bronze Tub with a Brāhmī inscription from Swat," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 25. 2011 [2015], pp. 147–156, p. 153). The noun *niyātana*, on the other hand, seems to be rare: Only one reference from the *Sādhanamālā* is listed in BHSD. It is perhaps not by chance that the meaning "gift" for *niyātana* is known to the Buddhist (?) lexicographer Amara: *niryātanaṃ … dāne*, 3.3.120.

members of the Toḍa family: Four brothers (or partly brothers-in-law) and their four wives (or partly sisters) with altogether five children, two boys and three girls among whom one is shown as a young grown up. Following the inscription this is a "family portrait" and as such provides a rare glimpse of an ancient Indian family and indicates the number of its living members. For, next to nothing is known about the size or the number of surviving children in ancient Indian families.[47]

While the interpretation of the inscription accompanying the donation made by the Toḍa family was doubtful at first only because of a badly written word, other inscriptions, although easily read, are hard to understand at once. An example is the inscription accompanying a rather unusual representation of acrobats: *lakhako meyakathālikā* (IV.6). (Fig. 9) Although the first word looks like a derivation from Skt. *lakṣaka*, which does not make any sense at all, it is to be interpreted as *laṃghako* "acrobat" with a development of -*gh*- even after a nasal to -*kh*- due to the influence of Dravidian phonetics on the Prakrit at Kanaganahalli.[48] Thus reading and interpretation of the inscription concur with the content of the image and, consequently, the first part of the text can be considered as understood correctly.[49]

The second part can be explained from a paragraph in the Satipaṭṭhāna-Saṃyutta in the Mahāvagga of the *Saṃyuttanikāya*:[50]

*ekaṃ samayaṃ bhagavā Sumbhesu viharati – Sedakaṃ nāma sumbhānaṃ nigamo – tatra kho bhagavā bhikkhū āmantesi: bhūtapubbaṃ bhikkhave caṇḍālavaṃsiko caṇḍālavaṃsaṃ ussāpetvā Medakathālikaṃ antevāsiṃ āmantesi: ehi tvaṃ, samma medakathālike caṇḍālavaṃsaṃ abhi-ruhitvā mama uparikhandhe tiṭṭhāhī ti.*

*evaṃ, ācariyā ti kho bhikkhave Medakathālikā antevāsī caṇḍālavaṃsikassa paṭissutvā caṇḍāla-vaṃsaṃ abhiruhitvā ācariyassa uparikhandhe aṭṭhāsi.*

*atha kho bhikkhave caṇḍālavaṃsiko medakathālikaṃ antevāsiṃ etad avoca: tvaṃ, samma Medakathālike, mamaṃ rakkha, ahaṃ taṃ rakkhissāmi. evaṃ mayaṃ aññamaññaguttā añña-maññarakkhitā sippāni c'eva dassessāma lābhañ ca lacchāma, sotthinā ca caṇḍālavaṃsā orohissāmā ti*, SN V 168,17–169,3

"On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling among the Sumbhas, where there was a town of the Sumbhas named Sedaka. There the Blessed One addressed the *bhikkhu*s thus:

*Bhikkhu*s, once in the past an acrobat set up his bamboo pole and addressed his apprentice Medakathālikā thus: ʿCome, dear Medakathālikā, climb the bamboo pole and stand on my

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shoulders.' Having replied 'Yes, teacher,' the apprentice Medakathālikā climbed up the bamboo pole and stood on the teacher's shoulders. The acrobat then said to the apprentice Medakathālikā: 'You protect me, dear Medakathālikā, and I'll protect you. Thus guarded by one another, protected by one another,[51] we'll display our skills, collect our fee, and get down safely from the bamboo pole.'"[52]

It is beyond doubt that the image refers to this paragraph in the Saṃyuttanikāya, which must have been quite well known. A clear indication that the identification is correct is the name, particularly the feminine name Medakathālikā or the later Prākrit form Meyakathālikā occurring in Kanaganahalli for a male pupil called *lakhako* in the inscription and described as *antevāsī* in the text, both masc. This is also explicitly confirmed by the commentary to the *Saṃyuttanikāya itthiliṅgavasena laddhanāmaṃ*, Spk III 236,7 "a name taken in the feminine gender," which dispels all doubts about a boy with a feminine name.[53]

This story, which is introduced in the Saṃyuttanikāya by using a very old formula,[54] is also found in other Buddhist traditions, but only Theravāda seems to have preserved the unusual name Medakathālikā. Together with the name of the missionary Dundubhissara, which also seems to be used only in Theravāda sources, this is another however faint indication of possible Theravāda presence at Kanaganahalli.

The simile in which this story is told, explains how oneself and others are protected by mindfulness. Thus this image, which at a first glance seems to show a very worldly festival, — the caption in the excavation report says "Celebration of the birth of the Master" — ultimately turns out to have a very Buddhist background. Consequently, here an inscription is badly needed to understand the meaning of the image, and that was obviously felt also by the monks who conceived the program of images to be included in the scenes shown on the panels of the Adhālaka Mahācetiya.

However, not all images are provided with or explained by inscriptions. In some cases existing inscriptions seem to be superfluous even today, because the content of an image

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[51.] The commentary to the *Saṃyuttanikāya* (Spk III 226,7–32) adds that "protecting" here means holding the pole fast by the *ācariya*, watching the tip of the pole (*vaṃsagga*) all the time and go to the places, where the pupil jumps (*pakkhannapakkhannadisaṃ gacchanto*, Spk III 226,26) that is following the movements of the pupil closely. On the other hand, the pupil has to be careful to keep his balance on the pole in order to prevent the pole from being displaced and thus hurting the *ācariya*'s throat or forehead.

[52.] *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha. A New Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya* by Bhikkhu Bodhi. Oxford 2000, Vol. II, p. 1648.

[53.] Doubts are expressed by Bhikkhu Bodhi, as preceding note, p. 1925, note 167. Males bearing a female name do occur though very rarely, what has not been observed so far. This peculiarity is pointed out in the Theravāda commentaries and corroborated now by the Kanaganahalli inscription. Further examples are: *bhesikaṃ nhāpitaṃ āmantesi: ehi tvaṃ, samma bhesike …*, DN I 225,7 (variant in Bᵉ *rosike*) with the commentary *bhesikā ti evaṃ itthiliṅgavasena laddhanāmaṃ nhāpitaṃ āmantesi*, Sv 395,15; *cāle, upacāle, sīsūpacāle*, Th 41 with the commentary *cālā, upacālā, sīsūpacālā ti hi itthiliṅgavasena laddhanāmā te tayo dārakā*, Th-a I 117, 15–17, cf. Kenneth Roy Norman: *Elders' Verses I Theragāthā*. Lancaster ²2007, p. 146 on Th 41.

[54.] The *suttanta* is introduced by inserting the place name in parenthesis, which was, as the punctuation in edition and translation show, not recognized: O. v. Hinüber, "Hoary Past and Hazy Memory. On the History of Early Buddhist Texts," *JIABS* 29/2. 2006 [2008 (2009)], pp. 193–210, particularly pp. 198–200: "The Blessed One was dwelling among the Sumbhas – there is a settlement named Sedaka among the Sumbhas – there …" Whether or not the content *suttanta*s with an old introduction is also particularly old, may be worth while investigating.

showing, e.g., the *Chaḍḍanta-jātaka* certainly was and is easily recognized.[55]

In contrast to the *Jātaka*s which are mostly easily understood today and probably were by the visitors of the Adhālaka Mahācetiya during Śātavāhana times, inscriptions are badly needed to explain in many images such as the "demons" (??). (Fig. 10) For, it is at present impossible to determine, what is meant here. However, what is puzzling today was perhaps obvious for all visitors to the Adhālaka Mahācetiya during Śātavāhana times, who may have grasped the idea behind the image at once.

Even if there is an inscription, we might be sometimes at a loss to guess, which idea precisely an image is meant to communicate such as the one showing a *caityagṛha* labelled *daḷhagaho* (IV.4) "solid house". (Fig. 11)

As these first attempts at a preliminary interpretation of some very few examples show, meaning and significance of many images are difficult to grasp and are still far from being fully understood. Much further research is needed to do justice to the unusually rich material recovered from Kanaganahalli.

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[55.] Whether or not all *Jātaka* stories are systematically provided with labels, can be seen only when all images will have been identified.